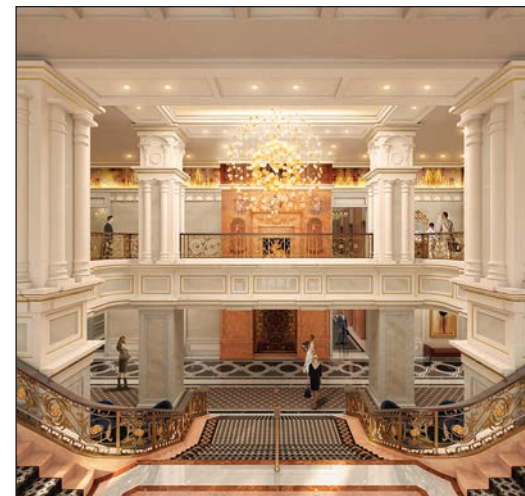


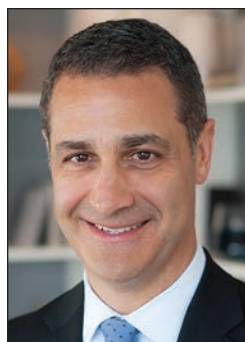
The “New” New York Palace

An Interview with David Chase,
General Manager, The New York Palace



Metropolitan Suite living area (left); rendering of
the Grand Lobby entrance on Madison Avenue (above)

EDITORS' NOTE David Chase has worked in the hospitality industry for over 20 years, beginning his career at The Ritz Carlton San Francisco in the catering arm of the hotel. After relocating to the east coast and working in Boston, he settled in New York to open the first W Hotel in New York City. Since then, Chase has held management positions at prestigious hotels such as the St. Regis, The Ritz-Carlton and, most recently, as the General Manager of Trump SoHo.



David Chase

PROPERTY BRIEF The New York Palace (www.newyorkpalace.com), a luxury midtown hotel on the corner of 50th & Madison, recently underwent a \$140-million renovation and unveiled its transformed look and feel in the fall of 2013. Additional upgrades include a brand new lobby and guest lounge, specialty suites, and six new restaurants and bars – two of which are helmed by renowned Chef Michel Richard. With 822 rooms and 87 suites, The Palace is known for unparalleled splendor, spectacular views, spacious rooms, and exquisite service. Located across the street from St. Patrick's Cathedral and steps from Rockefeller Center, the hotel's world-renowned courtyard incorporates motifs from several 15th-century Italian cathedrals and has served as the entranceway to the historic Villard Mansion since 1882. The New York Palace gracefully blends the landmark Villard Mansion with a contemporary 55-story tower.

In light of the recent renovation, was it important to retain some of the history and heritage of the property?

Throughout the renovations, we not only retained the history of the original building but worked to include its heritage in the new spaces as well. The Villard Mansion is a landmark building, and its storied 130-year history will always be an essential part of our identity.

In the lobby, it's nearly impossible to tell where the original ends and the modern era begins as the classic, gilded elements of the Villard Mansion have been seamlessly incorporated into the 33-year old lobby. There are so many iconic elements in the building, such as the grand staircase, and our aim was not to modernize the space during the renovations but to simply refine it. The end result was, of

course, a massive transformation but the connection to Villard's history remained as a prominent factor in the hotel's design aesthetic.

Is the property well understood in this crowded marketplace?

People are surprised when they hear we're 909 rooms, because there is still a feeling of intimacy. People relate us to smaller, luxury hotels.

We consider The Towers our five-star product – what we have done with it is best-in-class in the city. As far as room size, suite mix, and the size

of suites, none of the other five stars have the product we do, but I'm not sure that everyone is aware of that. A big part of the renovation was spent on The Towers since it had been the longest since it had been renovated. The work we did there was game-changing.

Is it possible for a hotel to really be successful in the food and beverage arena in New York?

It is tough in New York to make money with food and beverage. The Palace, however, has a lot of unique spaces available to us, and we've been able to take advantage of this by creating six new food and beverage experiences.

The patisserie, Pomme Palais, is brand new; the Lobby Lounge itself offers a large, comfortable seated area and Trouble's Trust provides another layer to the lobby with its sleek, den-like atmosphere hidden under the grand staircase.

Villard Michel Richard is a single restaurant offering two unique experiences: the front two rooms offer a bistro à la carte menu while the Gallery, the former home of Gilt, offers an elegantly prepared tasting menu.

We've also added Tavern on 51, a new bar that sits in the same street level space that the former Villard Bar did years ago. Tavern on 51 provides a relaxed yet sophisticated atmosphere that we expect both guests and neighborhood locals to enjoy.

On the second floor of the hotel, we've created an intimate lounge named Rarities. Situated in the original Villard Mansion space, Rarities is exclusive to guests of The Towers suites, and offers an in-depth menu of rare cognacs, ports, and wines, many of which have been sourced at auctions in order to secure the most distinctive selections for our guests.

Even with this impressive selection of venues, we are aware that food and beverage can be tough in New York and, with this in mind, we have certainly streamlined our efforts. Where we formerly had two separate restaurants prior to the renovations, we've focused our efforts into one three-meal restaurant, and expanded our bar and lounge offerings. There's a great deal of success to be had in the beverage industry and we're glad to be able to present our guests with a variety of options right here at the hotel.

We also see a significant amount of business from banquets and private events, which will expand with our newly renovated meeting spaces and new event spaces, such as The Apartment.

After the long road of renovations, we are excited to once again open our doors as a full-service luxury hotel, and we have really enjoyed welcoming our guests back in to rediscover all that The New York Palace has to offer.

Does it surprise you that with so much supply, there is still ample demand?

Even with the increased supply, we've continued to see our demand increase and occupancies remain on a steady, upward trend.

City-wide, we've seen thousands of new room nights appear and the city's occupancy rate rise from 84 to 87 percent over the past few years. At our grand unveiling event, Mayor Bloomberg quoted an impressive 52 million travelers coming into the city so while supply is always increasing, demand is certainly not slowing down anytime soon.

Has the word “luxury” lost some of its meaning?

With the sheer volume of outlets that refer to properties as ‘five-star’, the definition has indeed become a bit blurred, but there are still definitive rankings such as the Forbes five-star designation, which sets a clear standard for luxury. Of the over 400 hotels in the city, there are only 11 hotels with four stars and even fewer with five-star rankings. We're currently rated with four stars but consistently operate at a five-star standard.

Today, there are a great deal of boutique style hotels, but true luxury means service standards that never go away; the courtesies, precision, and appropriate amount of assistance to guests. With that level of service in mind, hotels with an automated check-in kiosk are missing the element of personalized service and human interaction that are a trademark of a luxury hotel. ●